

Patterns of Influences Affecting South Asian U of N Chronicles

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'This article on the importance of record-keeping and the link to history grew out of an assignment given in the *School of Redemptive History*, held earlier this year in East Asia. John Mraz, the University of the Nations Registrar for several regions of Asia, writes from many years of experience in keeping careful track of student records, often in very challenging contexts. Keeping careful records is a vital part of history as Mraz notes, and his analysis of the missing "gap" in a period in South Asia is a thoughtful example of the need for mission practice to be reflected on. This reflection and evaluation can then lead to needed changes, resulting in greater effectiveness and accomplishment of God's redemptive purposes.' Dr. Steve Cochran

Abstract

This article researches patterns of influences in South Asia that contributed to a gap in U of N course records, particularly between 1983 and 1999, when the additional factor of leadership turnover made it increasingly difficult to reconstruct missing records. Former and current leaders were interviewed. Most of the influences identified can be broadly categorised as 1) issues of primary focus, 2) the U of N not understood and not seen as a realistic future option, 3) 'recordkeeping' seen as a necessary burden, and 4) issues of isolation, language, nationalism and 'church-views.' Recommendations follow.

Keywords: U of N, South Asia, record keeping, influences, history

After a young team from Honolulu came to Kolkata in 1982, Youth With A Mission (YWAM) had its beginning in the South Asian region (Svoboda, 2006, p. 19). YWAM's University of the Nations (see ywam.org and uofn.edu for additional history and scope) offered its first South Asian training programs in 1983, with 16 students attending the first Discipleship Training School (DTS) in January 1983 in Uluberia, India, near Kolkata (Svoboda, 2006, p. 29). Since that time the U of N has offered and delivered around 2000 courses, with approximately 30,000 students, in the South Asian region alone.

Reading about the beginning of YWAM in South Asia, hearing the stories, and working alongside some of the pioneers and current school leaders, has given me an appreciation of the immense task they faced then, and we still face. Much of what is considered here is drawn from Sonya Svoboda's (2006) *Footprints of Faith*. However, part of this story is missing: it is the 16 - 19 percent of known YWAM/UofN school records that are unaccounted for. These are stories of students who came to receive from the U of N through discipleship and training that are not recorded in our chronicles.

There are many reasons for this failure in record-keeping; some are highlighted below. The main aim is to understand patterns of influences in South Asia that contributed to missing records (missing, rather than lost, as we still hope to add them to our chronicles), particularly

between 1983 and 1999 – a time period for which we are now losing leaders who might help reconstruct these cold cases. Though solving this is part of my job description as U of N International Registrar for this region, it is more than that.

Background

My journey has taken me from seeing record-keeping as primarily a secular, non-godly issue, to understanding that without records we lose our history, and without doing history we will never be a whole people. Records are stories of people's lives, opportunities for glorifying God's goodness (Ps 102:15; 145:4-7ff). A record becomes God's way of reminding and teaching the next generation (Rom 15:4). Records come in many formats (written, spoken, performances, prose, poem, narrative, tablets, books, steles or otherwise expressed), and they exist, Romans 15:4 tells us, to bring hope.

I came into this research project with a bias: I understood missing records to be about two issues. Firstly, the issue of visionary leaders not seeing the purpose of keeping records since they were focused on pioneering (in this view records are a painful administrative 'burden'). Secondly, worldview issues where school leaders and others do not see the value of keeping records for one reason or another. Through this research project God has reminded me of the diversity of his work and his people, and to never lose sight of the humanity of history: doing history is not about a measured package that fits all. As Hershel wrote: 'Any attempt to formulate a theory, to stamp a dogma, to define God's itinerary through history, is a sham, fraught with pretension' (2001, p. 225).

A recent reflection guides me: 'History is still being written' (Lecture, Gary Pang, April 2018). The book of Acts is open-ended. What are the implications of this to us as a movement? Do we see ourselves as 'history writers'? Do we consider that when we are gone, what we have not passed on will be lost to the next generation?

Records represent the purpose of history, primarily God's redemptive history. The books of Luke - both his Gospel and the Acts - are representative of this redemptive history, and the value and purpose of keeping records. Luke presents the mission and message of Jesus as the decisive historical event by which all God's acts of redemption are to be understood. Luke regards history to be the realm of God's redemptive activity and interprets the movement and goal of history by this fact (Ellis, 2003, p. 15). Luke shows us that the story of Christ and of the Church is ongoing, and still continues on into the future. As Jonathan Edwards (2003) states in comments on Isaiah 51:8: 'The Work of Redemption is a work that God carries on from the fall of man to the end of the world.'

Herschel (2001) affirms God's interaction with man in history, not as 'a God out there somewhere,' but a God who comes in close, present, experiencing his creation's emotions, and therefore allowing him to move from judgement to forgiveness. But also, a God not just involved with Israel but all nations (as in Jer 1:5). Herschel reaffirms aspects of my work as a record keeper. Scripture – records – allow us in hindsight to see that God is into the big picture, whereas we see it through small lenses of constraints we live within (current time, limited or biased historical records etc.) Like Herschel says: 'For history is not what is displayed at the moment, but what is concealed in the mind of the Lord' (p. 219). We speak of patterns to be looked for that allow us to see some glimpses of God's mind. Patterns through time. Patterns in geography. And patterns within people.

Historical records must have relevance; history is not merely stockpiled information. History is the struggle to provide accountability to the present in light of the past, and to search out and identify that which has significance to the future (Rea, 2014). God cares about and records his interaction with his creation, as seen for example in the historical relevance of 'the remnant.' In remnants we see God's continued presence, love, commitment, and the hope he provides to his creation. Scripture relates the story of a specific moment (time) amongst a specific people (creation) in a specific location (geography). The same narrative appears in extra-biblical records. Examples include the hidden Church in Japan – a story of suppression and survival (Dougill, 2015); the first Chinese church's disappearance in 781 AD and its re-emergence under the Mongols in the 12th century (Moffet, 1998; Jenkins, 2008); the Moravian Brothers – a remnant given a new home (Benge & Benge, 2006); and the great stories of the church of the Arabic peninsula. Dalrymple (1998) believed he was seeing the beginning of the end of the church in the East (p. 454). Yet as it is in diaspora, the pattern of the remnant speaks of its return. God cares for and records his interaction with his creation. Records reflect that.

The immediate purpose of U of N records is to provide accountability to the present in light of the past, in quality control of courses. We don't want lifeless programs. We want transformational learning experiences and accountability as a principle of discipleship. As a movement we are action-focused, but we also need reflection on that action, reviewing it, reporting it to others, and passing on lessons learned - as well as passing on mistakes from which we have learnt and communicating where the Lord has helped us (Bloomer, 1995). Records aim to provide this accountability to the present in light of the past, as well as to search out and identify that which has significance for the future.

In Scripture we see three elements of history – people, geography, and time. God paints a broad picture, but he also paints details. He is concerned for the nations and the 'whole' earth, as well as for the individual. It's the significance of what he models through Scripture that is important to me as a keeper of chronicles. It's easy to read Numbers 33, for example, as nothing more than a long list of layovers in Israel's journey from Egypt to Moab. Why keep a record of this? Perhaps to help the Israelites retrace that forty-year journey in their thoughts and recall God's faithfulness at each location.

Imagine an Israelite father sitting by a campfire, reminiscing with his children: 'I will never forget Rephidim! I was dying of thirst, nothing but sand and sage for hundreds of miles. Then God directs Moses to take his rod and speak to a rock— a hard slab of flint. I thought, what a futile gesture. He'll never get anything out of that stone. To my amazement water gushed out of that rock! A generous flow that satisfied the thirst of the thousands of Israelites. I'll never forget that day!' (Ps 114:8; Num 20:8–13; 33:14). Did they ponder how God's guidance mystified them? Did they feel like they were traveling in circles? As they reviewed the stages of their journey, did they remember the ways God had shown them his faithful love?

A personal reflection from a board meeting follows. Darcie and I had worked together a few years; Bob was our newest member. Bob commented that Darcie and I were very excited talking about what to him was a boring topic - meeting with government department officials. As we reflected on it, we realised that these meetings were our 'field' times - at times wilderness, at times networking, discipling and disciplining, but in each of them we saw God's hand placing us at the right time in the right place. The key was that this was *our journey*, with meaning and life for us – and a sense that each of us would one day have our own stories to add to the picture.

In our record keeping, can we see the life that such records can bring? Am I willing to give each of my students a copy of lecture and field assignment reports, so that they could sit down and be reminded that God's faithfulness extends to all generations?

In the context of these background reflections, a few specific questions have guided this inquiry. What influences have our leaders faced in keeping U of N records? How did these influences impact them? Are there patterns that we can be aware of to help school leaders with administrative work? What are some strategies that may help?

Methodology

The investigation process was pursued via an email survey sent to 63 current and former leaders of YWAM ministries and U of N schools. They were asked about missing records and their potential knowledge of what might have motivated the lack of compliance with record-keeping protocol. Twenty-seven of the 63 persons contacted responded. Comments featured below are drawn from those responses. Additional survey detail can be supplied upon request.

Subsequent to the email survey, I had Skype conversations and additional email conversations with current and previous leaders with shared history in U of N South Asia, to enrich my understanding of the dynamics involved. I lean heavily on Svoboda's (2006) telling the YWAM South Asia story through the eyes of a number of leaders of the time. I have also drawn from reference materials on religion and beliefs in South Asia, and materials previously consulted in regard to the value of records in God's Kingdom. Lastly, I have been able to access U of N statistical information through my work as U of N International Registrar for Asia.

Analysis of Results

Tapestry of influences

The feedback I gathered reflected tremendous diversity, and the responses did not fit the mould I had created. I was looking for patterns that would reflect why we have missing records, particularly, but not exclusively, from the late 1980s into the 1990s. I faced a significant geographic barrier, working from Australia while most of my direct sources were in South Asia. Though I sent the survey to 63 key people, feedback was sparse (of the 27 respondents, 22 are located in and serving in South Asia). Was there language confusion? For many of those I wrote, English is not the language of preference. Was my choice of media incorrect? Would social media applications like Messenger, WhatsApp, or Signal, have been better than email?

The feedback was broad, reflecting breadth in the personal experiences of the respondents. As I looked over the data gathered and considered the respondents, I was aware that I needed to lay aside pre-conceptions mentioned earlier, and let people speak, as well as let the Holy Spirit guide, in understanding some of the complexity. World-view is not a set standard of influences that creates cookie-cutter perceptions of life, but is more like an orange with various segments that each individual will have differently. Cole (2013) calls it a 'framework of reference.' Each segment may reflect a sphere of influence that is itself moulded by diverse influences, that even for those living together as family, people group, or nation, we still end up with individual 'world-views,' similar but still different from one another. Each person is a unique individual, and must be seen as such. Some worldview segments influence one another, but not in isolation. It would be easy to say that religion/belief is the primary influence from which all else is impacted. And yet belief is itself influenced by other segments of our frames of reference.

Another aspect of relevance here is the individual perspective I bring to this study. As I consider the research, not only am I discerning perspectives and influences faced by individuals I am speaking to, but I am also perceiving this information through my own lenses. The researcher's role involves more than simply to 'uncover the facts about a given situation and report them in an objective manner' (Johnson, 2015, p. 5). Johnson says that 'the individual researcher's perspective, as well as the interpretive framework of his/her culture and community, has a powerful impact on the direction of the project' (p. 5). He concludes that 'we don't have to know everything. There is room for interpretation and even personal bias, as long as it is explained and accounted for' (p. 7).

Three statements have come to mind as I have reviewed my own 'world-view' as well as what I read. Worldviews do not fit a box. Influences must be understood in context – in terms of place, time, and the individual involved. God's word must not be disregarded.

For simplicity I categorise the survey responses under four headings. First, the question of how the primary focus of a YWAM ministry at a given time affected its record-keeping, secondly, the fact of University of the Nations being relatively misunderstood, being as David Hamilton said 'a new kind of animal' (Hamilton, 1995); thirdly, the matter of record-keeping being seen as a necessary burden, and finally, the way record-keeping was affected by isolation, 'church-views,' and nationalism. Perhaps none of these influences stands on its own. Each is woven into a context including the individual and the circumstances of a given moment in time.

Issues of primary focus at a given time

Establishing a beach-head. The first influence that stood out to me came as a question in one of the interviews. 'Have you looked at challenges that *any* pioneer or church planter would face when stepping onto new soil? Look at the reality they faced and imagine that our own people were not so dissimilar to them.' What did they face as they established 'beach heads' into new territory? What was the focus at that time?

When an army goes into securing a 'beach head' the main priority is establishment. In the early days of the YWAM South Asia story, simply getting established was a big priority, and what that looked like depended on the nature of the team. To the evangelist, going onto the street to meet people is priority; to the church planter, preaching the word will be priority to establish a church; establishing language, establishing home, establishing discipleship. In some places remoteness and isolation were issues. Security consciousness is also a concern – in places where a low-profile is safer, being too formally structured can get you noticed and lead to problems. God had called them to focus on the 'beach-head' and a small strip of land beyond.

What you end up focusing on can readily become the sacred. The pioneer may unconsciously model this to others. What the pioneer, and through the pioneer, what the disciple sees as *real* - evangelism, preaching, church planting – is prioritised, and the rest may be lost in transition. The Scriptural story in Acts 6:1-4 of the twelve apostles spending time in the word rather than waiting on tables can be dichotomised into saying that one action is higher than the other. By implication, this order of priority becomes the church culture, the DNA – embodied in the structure. The sacred versus the secular is still ingrained within the broader church. In this case the visionary's role is sacred, the administrator is secular – 'I wanted to get on with the real thing, of changing people's lives; I didn't want to get tied up with filling in forms....'

We could refer to this as our organisational culture. An organisation's culture develops in large part from its leadership, while the culture of an organisation can also affect the development of its leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1993, p. 112). Weber and Eisenstadt (2013) believed that followers of a charismatic leader willingly place their destiny in their leader's hands and support the leader's mission that may have arisen out of 'enthusiasm, or of despair and hope' (p. 49), but stated that the charismatic effect and legacy of the leader may continue as artefacts of the organizational culture.

As YWAM, we are a movement that actively recruits the pioneer, evangelist and church planter – it is part of who we are. And yet we also represent other callings and gifts. David Hamilton addressed this in a 2015 YWAM gathering, issuing the challenge that without one another, the work of both the pioneer/visionary and the maintainer/administrator will die. The pioneer's work will die without anyone taking it on and growing and nurturing it. The pioneer will continually move to something new. His planting needs to be nurtured. But the maintainer's work will also die without the continuous challenge of moving forward, re-visioning. It will stagnate.

We need to impart unity in diversity, a celebration of one another's contribution. One of our respondents highlighted that in her study of Philippians, she was challenged by Paul's honouring of a co-worker: 'I (Paul) send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs' (Phil 2: 25). One of the pioneer leaders in our School of Biblical Studies in South Asia sent me this heart cry – 'I personally don't mind publicly admitting how desperately us visionaries and creative types need those with admin gifts.' As Gardner (1965) notes, leaders 'express the values that hold the society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.'

People's immediate needs as the focus. Respondents also indicated that a predominant emphasis on the immediate care and security of the individuals around them affected record-keeping. One respondent reported 'in those early days when emailing was unreliable, and many people were not computer literate we had to do the best we could with what we had, and I do believe that the most important result was that many of the students had their lives changed forever.' The most important priority is based on the individual of concern at the moment. Again, the respondent noted 'These budding relationships were likened to that of the Apostle Paul and the young man he took into his care, Timothy.' It is no surprise that the early chapters of Svoboda's (2006) chronicle are a continuous outpouring of people's names.

Though we will see later that leaders often had a limited perspective of the individual's potential past the initial DTS, the desire within South Asia was to release the individual into their call and ability in God. One of the priorities was to see indigenous leadership raised up. It also meant that priorities were set around people's needs. The individual took priority. Svoboda mentions this in chapter five where she remembers the continuous knocks on the front door calling her father away from home. Setting boundaries (securing the long-term well-being of the whole) was outweighed by the (immediate) focus on the needy individual.

Multiplication of new locations. A final focus-based area I highlight here is the matter of how seasons of growth carry distinct emphases. This observation came out of two stages of growth in both India and Nepal. During the late 1980s YWAM India held the Go Fest in Mumbai. At the end of the week one of the highlights was seeking God about 'where to from here.'

Multiplication was the word. To establish YWAM in 100 towns and cities over the next five years. And they went. God's word.

U of N training was a tool to pioneer YWAM into new areas, especially so the Discipleship Training School. This led to great demand for leaders and staff to run new courses. The implications are many. At times we respond to God's word without asking follow-up questions. Survey feedback noted that when a school leader was required for a new venture, staff were drawn into roles for which they were unprepared: 'As far as the actual teaching and running of the school I had to do the best I could. I was given absolutely no guidance whatsoever on the requirements of the University of the Nations, so I concentrated on the teaching and training side of the school.' Though administrative details were often left undone, God allowed incredible fruit.

The University of the Nations – 'a new kind of animal' (Hamilton, 1995)

Another respondent manifested an underlying non-understanding of the U of N. 'Back then I had no idea what I was doing with the paperwork....it was all about the students.... not long-term degree stuff.' As previously mentioned, a primary focus of the period was the individual, the student, yet understood more in a discipleship sense than in an educational sense. I separate the two here to make a point of how a sacred-secular dichotomy is unhelpful, where discipleship refers to the sacred, and education speaks of the secular model. This dichotomising reflects deficient understanding: education rightly understood is holistic and necessarily incorporates discipleship at its most fundamental level – walking alongside. To explore this further is beyond the focus of this article.

There may always be a certain inherent tension between YWAM as missional movement and U of N as institution. Howard Malmstadt reminded us that 'The U of N is prophetic and apostolic – visionary, missions focused, empowering team and unity, multiplying new things in new ways, building the kingdom of God in the earth' (Malmstadt, 1995). Derek Chignell remembers the educator Ted Ward challenging us at the first U of N Workshop in 1989 in Lausanne that 'it would be impossible to combine the strong visionary, fluid paradigm of YWAM with the structure and long-term consistency needed to run a university' (Personal conversation, D. Chignell). Evidently Ward found the two incompatible. The challenge is still there, but now we see the need for both, in productive tension. It can only work if we love and respect each other.

It is of interest that the early church struggled with similar tensions, between a centralising influence as represented in Peter, and a diversifying influence, as represented by Paul. MacCulloch in his BBC series 'History of the Church' (2009) wonders why the Roman church under Damasus I (Pope from 366 AD - 384 AD) turned away from its founding father in Paul, the visionary church planter and pioneer, to shift its emphasis to Peter, the stable, maintainer, head of governance. What if the church had embraced Paul – would it have become a more de-centralised structure, a movement?

This issue of a centralising versus a de-centralising tendency relates to feedback I received. Some U of N school leaders look to 'accepted universities' and how record keeping is understood to happen there. In many cases the onus is on the student to pursue their records. In a global university, who is responsible to ensure a student's file is updated when they take another course?

Many students who enter the U of N don't believe they can succeed educationally and don't expect to complete a degree. One of the values of the U of N is that we champion those with limited educational opportunity. Tom Bloomer says: 'The U of N is not about trying to fail people but rather to help them succeed. Our role as trainers is to identify the way in which each individual can achieve success and then do whatever it takes to help them get there. Our model of training is one of partnership, working side by side on an individual basis, as opposed to impersonal passing of information' (1995).

Championing our students may mean that it can take more than the normal time to complete a degree. In the U of N – we are a 'different animal' – we encourage students to intermingle studies with practical experience on the field, so that learning and service build upon one another. There is no time limit for completing a U of N degree. Our records need to reflect and allow for this. The onus is on us to care for our students. The underlying issue perhaps isn't as much about valuing records as it is about valuing students. Not that leaders don't value the individual, but it's the 'whole care' issue. Do we believe in them for more? I myself am one of those that had a convoluted educational upbringing. At the age of 10 the educational system I belonged to, told me that I wasn't 'smart enough' to pursue academic studies, therefore I was sent down the vocational educational stream. Similarly, when the School of Biblical Studies (SBS) started in Nepal, not many believed that Nepalis would be able to handle the SBS course and study load – 'levels and capacities of students meant massive shifts and growth just to start doing study.' Others have said that they don't see their DTS students doing any more than the DTS. By implication, it may seem, recording has no purpose.

Record keeping - seen as a necessary burden

We've considered priorities of earlier leaders and possible pitfalls leading to records not being a priority. Some people have called this 'no commitment,' others 'time management,' and others 'world-view.' Whatever the reason at the time, we have grown in these areas, but we also continue to carry some of the modelled priorities. It is not all bad: we had (and have) many leaders wanting to do well in keeping the chronicles. But we need to continue to break down the sacred-secular division in our thinking. Many who do well have been wounded by a lack of affirmation of the administrative role (not just record keeping). 'In YWAM "X" [name of location withheld for confidentiality reasons] at least many people with that gifting never felt honoured and the gift itself not as valued as a truly spiritual calling like preaching and teaching.'

An article from *Theology Today* describes well the change of perspective we need to see. 'The secular business world is an arena in which one can pursue the vocation of serving God. In order to be obedient to Jesus Christ, one need not leave the business world and matriculate at a theological seminary! Rather, according to John Calvin, one's vocation is to serve God in whatever job one pursues. What makes the work sacred is not the work itself—but the attitude with which one approaches it' (Tewel, 2003).

A respondent noted: 'In YWAM the topics of the schools reaffirm that calling in itself. Why is it that most degrees we have are in the areas of Christian Ministries? The School of Administration ran twice in India, but once the leader left YWAM the school stopped. This may reflect value within the mission.' Maybe the people with the skills would step forward if we proactively affirmed administration as valid 'sacred' ministry.

The feedback I have received over the years separates the needs within record keeping into two areas - lack of understanding, and lack of knowledge. Let me define these two, as much of the feedback used the two terms interchangeably, though with distinctly nuanced meanings.

Lack of understanding. As already discussed, this is either misunderstanding or non-validation of the importance of record keeping. Most respondents identified this as a training need. There is a growing desire to not just do the job well, but to understand the values and purposes behind record keeping in the U of N. Particularly in South Asia many past students have carried a sense of de-validation of their accomplishments by non-existing records i.e. 'my studies, therefore my accomplishment, therefore I, am not important.' There is a ripple effect on the validity of the U of N as a university, not just within our YWAM family and students, but also in the wider community (church, educational sphere). Many training locations are only now embracing the view that they are part of the U of N, not just a ministry location running DTSSs.

In the U of N we keep specific records, but we need to know why. When I teach this, I always remind them that we need to see that records bring life and hope, not just sit on a shelf gathering dust. In the same way our leaders and staff need to believe in this principle, that what they are gathering and recording will bring life and hope. Without knowing this, there is no incentive to embrace record keeping. It becomes a burden.

Lack of knowledge. In contrast with the above, this lack of knowledge is about not having the tools, skills, and language to do the work of record-keeping. Lack of training is related to two of the previous aspects of multiplication and priorities. If record keeping is not valued as a key aspect of the 'whole care' of a student, it will not be multiplied well. The students don't see its value through their staff, who don't see it modelled through their leader. So we end up with a drift toward a complete absence of record keeping. 'Our leaders back then just threw you into leading a school and with very little training or mentoring.' As previously noted, school staff focused almost exclusively on the immediately essential, walking alongside the student's present discipleship process.

Our staff development must not only focus on the teaching and training sides of our courses, but on the support roles each school requires: not just knowing the roles, but capturing the purpose, and mastering the skills and time management. In the Basic Leadership School (BLS) which for many years was the primary school staff training course (the first mention of this in South Asia was not until the mid-1990s), the focus of training was primarily on 'learning how to disciple and raise those we are leading.' There was very little input regarding 'backbone' activities such as record keeping, or financial management.

Should the U of N insist that training locations meet minimum pre-requisites in regard to support roles? Who mentors, walks alongside, debriefs those initial few courses? We do have good staff development workshops, but I hear Nehemiah's call (Neh 4:19) 'the work is spread out, and we are widely separated from each other.' Can we champion in a greater way what Nehemiah says next? 'When you hear the trumpet call, rush to wherever it is sounding' – the trumpet call in this case being our workshops and other staff training opportunities.

Language. The inability to manage the language expectations of U of N record-keeping was another aspect mentioned in feedback and interviews. In the early days, when mostly foreigners ran our training, it was generally accepted that South Asian records were in English. As YWAM grew, and more of our school leaders were local people whose first language (or

second, or third) was not English, we still kept our record requirements in English (or in other regions, Spanish and Portuguese). Forms easily multiplied across nations and courses, and more often than not, were easily read by college leaders who needed to review them. Even so, this expectation that certain language groups adapt to the use of the dominant language is often referred to as 'linguistic imperialism' – 'the transfer of a dominant language to other people' (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47). I don't believe we meant this in the sense which infers a 'demonstration of power,' but as we grew more and more, people struggled with the language requirement. For many, completing records was intimidating, as it revealed their English inadequacy. People struggled with the language requirement.

Tied together with other influences we spoke of earlier, the language issue led to a moment when we started to 'lose' records that were never completed. One of the requirements for our records is that we ask the school leader/location to keep a copy of the final lecture and field assignment evaluation and grade reporting for their own long-term records. Perhaps in part because people did not understand the instructions, there are many bases that do not have this record copy (remembering that in the early days they did not have the luxury of keeping electronic copies on a computer). The implication for us today is that we have no backup copies to go to if we need to identify missing records that may have been lost in transit. More could be said about this aspect.

The encouragement I have received through the feedback is that our systems are improving, and as we step into the digital age, translation apps as well as records storage are improving our ability to overcome the language issues. We must not be complacent, however, or think that this solves all our issues. Languages are complex, not all are in the same script. Translation apps such as Google Translate are still limited in accuracy. Computer literacy, and email usage - which weren't common in those early days - are expected today, and that in itself can involve a big assumption. There is a difference between computer literacy and being able to afford the computer. We offer courses in the outlying areas where technology access is not the norm. How do we serve those leaders?

Additional factors that influence

There is so much more that influenced our leaders back in those days, and still influences us today. Some of these we have no choice in, others we do.

Isolation and remoteness. The joke of 'Lost in the Mail' is not so much a joke as a reality of the early days. 'We had no internet, no emails, communication was post and that meant time and trusting integrity of postal services.' In my role as registrar this could have devastating implications – 'you know you sent it, but I didn't receive it, and therefore am unaware that you have run a school, so I have no knowledge and cannot follow-up.' While the flow of communication regarding that school has stopped, you are still waiting for student certificates, confirmation of receipt, and closure. If this happens a few times, trust in the U of N is hit badly, and may result in something like the scenario I recently was faced with: 'I stopped sending course records because I didn't receive certificates for my students after the first school I led. What was the point? No one connected with me.' Because of the perceived isolation we found out about these schools six years later.

There will be issues of isolation we will not know about until much later. There have been leaders who have gone out and only years later we have found out of their good work. But it was

done in a way that is hard to verify and therefore validate today. Isolation will take many forms. Intermittent communication is wrongly seen as no commitment. Loneliness, 'now' focus, survival mode, etc. will all affect the ability to keep records.

World-views or Church-views. World-view is certainly a factor in the individual's view and perspective, but it did not show up as clearly as I expected. What did show up in survey responses is what I would call 'church-view,' a utilising of Christian eschatology or epistemology to justify one's stance. One respondent gave the following reason for not keeping any record beyond what the government required: 'Jesus is coming back soon, so why bother about keeping records; they will be obsolete – what a waste of time.' My only comment here would be Jesus' own words (if you wish to dichotomise sacred and secular) 'give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God' (Matthew 22:21). Howard Malmstadt's oft-repeated challenge reverberates in my mind: 'No records, no university' (U of N Records Guide, 2005, p. 4).

The other more indirect 'church-view' I have heard in regard to multiplying leaders and not preparing them is the view, held quite broadly, that 'the best model of learning and moving forward is to throw the "newbie" into the frying pan – God will provide.'

Nationalism. The last element of this section is what I call 'Nationalism – it is not our way of doing things.' Svoboda (2006, p. 68) comments that during Indira Gandhi's term as Prime-Minister of India (1966-1977 and 1980-84), Gandhi pushed nationalism and independency of India, Indian economy and Indian self-reliance. The motto 'Be Indian, buy Indian' was aimed to rid India of foreign products and enable India to stand on her own strength. Though not likely intended by the government, this initiative may have helped catalyse Indian indigenous missions. Svoboda relates how this climate of rejecting colonial influences shaped the story of YWAM South Asia (2006, pp. 86-98).

This may also have affected the U of N. There is a perception among some indigenous leaders that the U of N is a foreign university, perhaps partly because it was founded in the USA, its largest campus is in the USA, and because until very recently – 2010 – all records were sent to be processed by the International Registrar in Hawaii, USA. It is not hard to understand that by implication, our records are an American, or if not, at least a western institution.

As we embrace our individuality as a people, we embrace the diversity that God created in us. But when we consider our cultural uniqueness as above that of others, we become no different to the ones we carry bitterness towards. Are our U of N chronicles diluted because of differences that create reactions, rather than responses, to a 'white lie' the enemy has nurtured? How do we nurture the value that the U of N is a global university, as David Hamilton said 'a new kind of animal'? One of the ways has been to encourage indigenous leadership globally, in all aspects of the U of N. The seven members of the office of the International Registrar represent six different nations (Brazil, USA, Costa Rica, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Australia). This comes with the cost of needing to embrace diversity, not just our own identity.

Conclusion and Implications

The above aspects relate what may be major influences to why records were not kept well. Even so, there is much to affirm. The feedback I received demonstrated an increased valuing of our records and a personal growth in recognising their importance. For some this has

come through receiving a degree with the U of N. For others it has been their own discovery of 'whole care' of their students as they have learnt more of the DNA of the U of N, or received training on how to improve their school leadership. For others it has been a broadened awareness of how their studies influence the sphere they serve – increasing the impact on their communities. This is the fruit of record keeping.

Mary's testimony highlights this for me. Mary (name changed to protect her identity) was born in Bhutan to a loving family and had an ambition to become a doctor. At about 13 she made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ, and within two years lost everything – ending up as a refugee in Nepal at the age of 15. She lost hope of ever becoming a doctor. In Nepal a YWAM leader believed in her and gave her the opportunity to join the DTS at just 15. Over the next years she continued working and studying in YWAM and the U of N and in 2018 graduated with the U of N, earning an Associate of Science in Primary Health Care. She has staffed and led over 10 Primary Health Care schools in Nepal. She tells us

A student like me had no hope to get any sort of degree from any university in my life time, but after completing the courses and receiving those credits, I have now graduated in PHC [Primary Health Care]. When I was kicked out of my country, I had desired to become a doctor; I lost hope to ever complete my studies. But later through the U of N God fulfilled my desire and I got my degree. As a doctor I dreamt to heal the physical needs of my people; but now I bring healing to both physical and spiritual needs – God multiplied what I believed was stolen. Record keeping is making a story of life which helps to look back and be thankful to God how far he brought us; which will give hope to people, and dignity to do what God has called them. We are history makers. Our next generation will be blessed to read God's stories. (Personal conversation, 2018)

As part of my survey I asked the question - 'How do you view the statement "history is still being written" and how do you see yourself as part of writing history?' Many found this a refreshing view. Jiggu B., a YWAM South Asia elder, expressed this very clearly: 'This [question] highlighted to me again the importance of not only being a faithful part of history, not only being faithful in making history, but also ensuring history is recorded. For it is through recording and passing on of our history, we effectively value lessons and wisdom we had to pay to earn.' Our focus often stays on the first part – making history, but not recording it. No records – no story.

Somewhere, in all of this, we need to have school leaders/staff who have a shift in mindset between forced record keeping and self-desired record keeping. I have seen this slowly happen over the last few years when we share from both biblical and personal stories. The Scripture 'Have you not known? Have you not seen? Has it not been told to you?' (Is 40:21) suggests a two-fold approach of not only speaking out the values but also allowing people to 'see' the value and fruit through actual stories of people. YWAM/UofN staff workshops like UNIQUIP allow such teaching and reflection to happen.

I am left with two main questions at the end that deserve further inquiry. First, how do we administratively serve a pioneering leader as he or she continues to step out into new frontiers and who may use U of N courses as a building block to do so? This is the calling of both YWAM and the U of N. Secondly, how do we multiply both our values and the skill development that school leaders need, in training and support service, to adequately address the dichotomy of sacred and secular views of ministry?

Some of this has already started. Responses like the UNIQUIP conference lay a DNA foundation of the U of N. Ongoing discussions consider further staff training to deepen understanding and strengthen administrative development.

Svoboda (2006) tells of James Smith's Macedonian call in Nepal. 'When I told the old man, I needed to be leaving, his words cut me to the heart. "You just told me about God, and now you're leaving. No one in this village knows about God. I cannot read your book [Bible], there is no book to tell us what we must do"' (p. 57). Leaders out on the field, faithfully discipling, training and reaching out to the people of their region, isolated in one form or another, need our help, our discipling, our training, so they can be faithful in the whole care of students. Many would say with that old man 'you've given me the minimum and now you are leaving.' The next picture I have is of a contemporary church that expects people to come to the church rather than the church going out to them. I sense God's challenge in raising up teams that carry the values and the skills, and go, rather than expecting them to always come. This is not a call for an individual, but for a group of small teams, available in their region, available by phone, text, Messenger, etc. There is a right place for this, as for corporate times of workshops, conferences, and the like. Nothing replaces having taken the time to visit and see their circumstances and the people they work amongst, and to be able to advise accordingly.

Henri Nouwen said 'One of the remarkable qualities of the story is that it creates space. We can dwell in a story, walk around, find our own place. The story confronts but does not oppress; the story inspires but does not manipulate. The story invites us to an encounter, a dialogue, a mutual sharing. As long as we have stories to tell to each other there is hope. As long as we can remind each other of the lives of men and women in whom the love of God becomes manifest, there is reason to move forward to new land in which new stories are hidden' (1977, p. 65).

Record keeping isn't glamorous, but without it our work is incomplete.

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